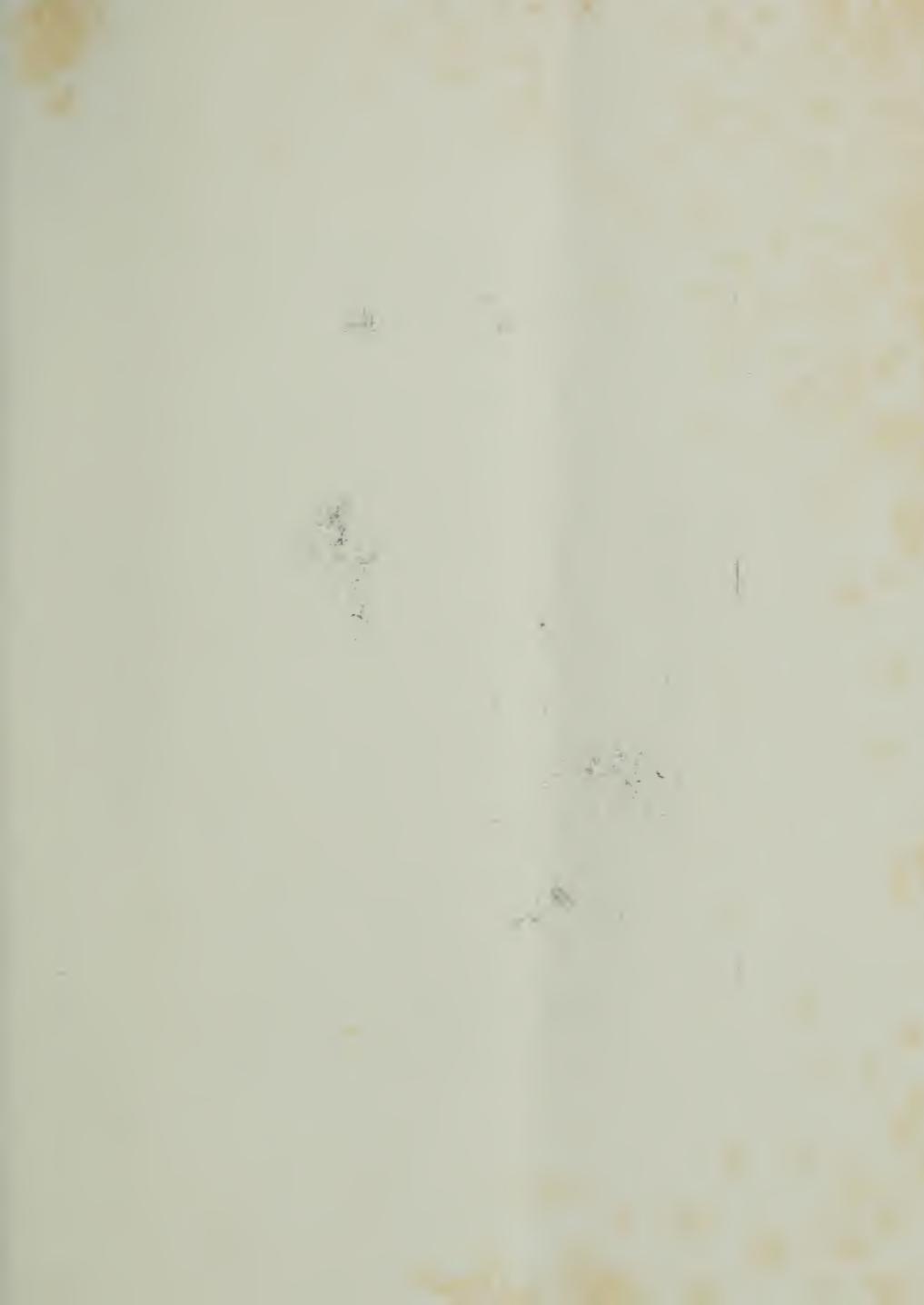
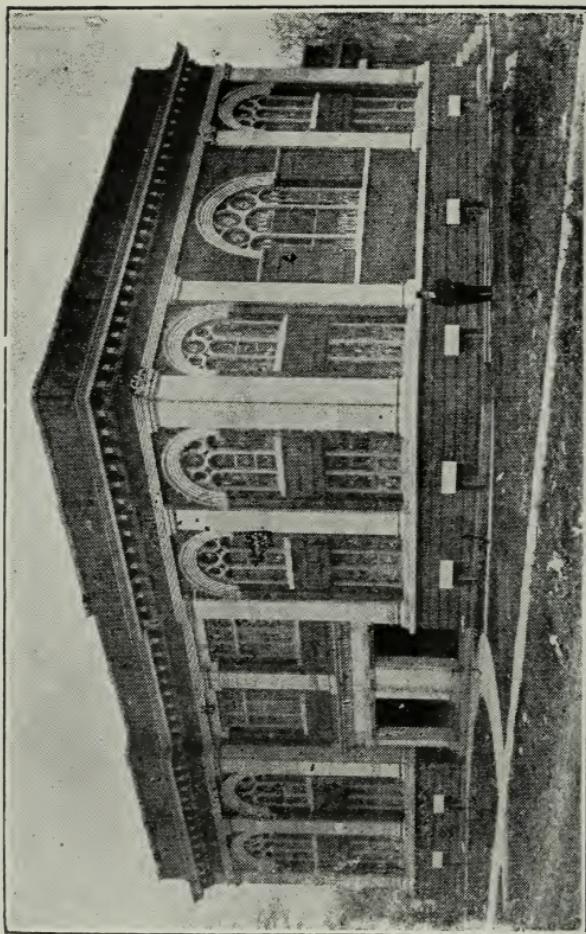


HISTORY
of the
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
of
KANSAS, ILLINOIS

1858 : 1935

ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY





KANSAS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Dedicated November 29, 1909

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In order that a written account, intelligible, accurate and interesting, may be made, the Session has authorized the election every ten years of a historian, whose transcription of the Sessional events form a record; not taking the place of the minutes, but affording a readable account of our Father's work of the past, and linking with our work at present writing and noting the continuity, both of the conditions and results. Much time has been lost which cannot be replaced. But the Session has appointed C. A. Hite historian for the present decade, which expires Nov. 7, 1938.

This leaves the history in line with the Decadal Past, and a natural plan for the future. The anniversary program may well be left to the discretion of the Ladies' Aid, only stipulating that the Session—which is the ruling authority—permit nothing to appear throwing doubt upon the Bible as the Word of God. Members of this church only may vote as to historian. In case of the decease or other valid reason, the Session shall declare the post vacant and appoint one to fill out the decade by appointment. No objection shall be made to a second term.

Few things are more fascinating to the old than the recounting of events of long ago in which they took some part as actors or observers.

The rising generation sometimes gets a little impatient at the oft repeated tale "of inglorious Miltons," who were not mute by any means. Tradi-

tion, of course, keeps alive for a time the knowledge of many of these events, but the lapse of years, and the final departure of the eye witnessss, gradually envelop the tales with a hazy indistinctness, until they get to be mythical in their outline, and oblivion swallows them up.

It is well, I think, before the catastrophe occurs, that a knowledge of the deeds, and experiences of our fathers and our friends shculd be so crystalized in a record that their descendants may know and recognize their debt to those who have gone before, and revere the memory of those into whose labors we have entered.

I have drawn both upon the sessional records and upon my own memory for much of the material of this sketch.

I have been an elder in this church for fifty years, and was a member of the choir for fifty-five years, and much of the record is of events which transpired under my own observation. I can imagine myself as a weary pilgrim near the end of his journey. The path has been long and at times difficult, the evil days have come and gone, leaving their imprint on him, the clouds have returned after the rain, they that look out of the windows are darkened. He stands on a slight elevation and looks back at the path he has travelled, shading his eyes with his hand. The soft rays of the setting sun throw a hazy glamour over the view; the shadows are lengthening, the twilight deepens, but he can discern, though perhaps none too clearly, the well-remembered landmarks along the way. There the impetuous temper of boyhood led him into error; there he stumbled, but was helped by a kind friend;

there God's providence tempered the bitter storm of adversity, and comforted him in sorrow.

These pictures float in my mind, as I look back over most of the 70 years since the organization of this church and doubtless the same pictures are paralleled in the memories of some of the older members here.

In 1858 the Old School Presbyterians organized a church, being duly authorized to do so by Palestine Presbytery.

There were seventeen charter members, all of whom have been transferred from the church militant to the church triumphant.

The only church building in Kansas at that time was the Protestant Methodist, which stood just west of the present Kansas National Bank building. A meeting was called on Saturday, Nov. 6, 1858, by the committee appointed by Presbytery; and after a sermon by Rev. Henry Venable, a partial organization was effected, and the meeting adjourned till the next day, Sunday, Nov. 7, when, after a sermon by Rev. John A. Steele, the organization was completed. These meetings and subsequent services, were held in the Protestant Methodist church, until the Presbyterians built their own church some four years later.

The early records are not full and how regularly services were held, I do not know, nor do I know who preached, except that Rev. Nathaniel Williams and Rev. J. W. Allison were ministers part of the time. Seventeen charter members constituted the church when organized. Their names follow: Geo. Brown, Hannah Brown, S. C. Hogue, Martha J. Hogue, Jas. F. Hogue, Samuel Hartzell,

Sarah Hartzell, Cyrus Goodale, Mrs. C. Goodale, Daniel Shafer, Mrs. M. Shafer, Henry Shafer, Louis Shafer, Henry Bull, Mrs. Mary Shy, Miss Mary Shy and Margaret Barnett. On March 18, 1862, a meeting was held and a building committee appointed consisting of Dr. J. M. Steele, John Y. Allison, Geo. Brown, Thos. Paxton and Dr. Geo. Ringland. This committee was also authorized to select a site. They seem to have worked with commendable zeal for in two weeks they had the site selected and \$2,000 subscribed and in another week had the building under contract. The stipulated cost was to be \$2,850 and it was to be completed by Dec. 1, 1862, but it was not finished until April, 1863.

The record does not show the exact date of the dedication of the church but it was evidently early in April, 1863. The dedication sermon was preached by Rev. R. A. Mitchell, at that time pastor of the Charleston church. Rev. Ellis Howell was present by invitation.

The bell was mounted on a timber structure near the church, the steeple not being considered strong enough to endure the vibration. The committee soliciting funds to purchase the bell was headed by Miss Matilda Paxton, now [1928] the oldest member of the church.

The dedication was the first thing I remember of this church and I distinctly remember that I thought the chandelier was the most gorgeous thing I had ever seen.

The first board of elders were John Y. Allison, Henry Bull, S. C. Hogue and Geo. Brown. On Sept. 9, 1864, the congregation extended a call to Rev. S. B. Taggart as pastor; Mr. Taggart accepted

and commenced his ministry. The salary seeming inadequate, Mr. Taggart supplemented it two years by teaching the public school. I read my first Latin under Mr. Taggart. He was a Princeton graduate, a man of musical ability, and an abounding sense of humor. I think it was his cultivated taste for good music which set the pace for the high standard which this church held so long for sacred music. Mr. Taggart was pastor for five years, and was succeeded by Rev. Robert Mitchell after a pastorate of 21 years in the Charleston church.

This brings us to a comparatively modern time for Mr. Mitchell's pastorate extended from 1869 to 1878. May I here comment briefly concerning this which I may term the pioneer stage of our history. This church has been self-supporting from the first; but with the initial cost of the church building and later the manse, with but few members, it was hard sledding.

Of course I had no part in the history up to this point, but I knew all these pioneers; they were men and women of like passions with us, they had their faults as we have, but there must have been a substratum of unconquerable faith, a loyal allegiance to their church, and a firm, unfaltering grip on the tenets of Old School Presbyterianism, which made the term "Calvinist" no misnomer for them. Some were of exceptional spirituality. Every one knew that Uncle Henry Bull was on the straight road to the celestial city, and he wasn't alone on that road either; but the man who seemed to me to be most indispensable to the church was Dr. Ringland. Many a time have I talked with him in his office concerning the kingdom, and our hopes for the

future, and on his death bed received his confident assurance that all was well.

After his death a man remarked to me, "I wish I was as sure of reaching heaven as I believe Dr. Ringland was."

But the pioneers are gone:

"Their swords are rust

Their bodies dust

Their souls are with the Lord we trust."

We strew flowers upon their memory, we bring a tardy appreciation of their faithful work; but they need not our commendation. We may forget their work, even their names, but not one of them is forgotten before God. "The Lord knoweth them that are His." The pioneers laid the foundations, the torch falling from their wearied hands has passed on to us. We have entered into their labors. Let us keep the faith.

The charter members are all gone, a few who participated in the pioneer work, and to whom these reminiscences may bring a gleam of the sunshine of memory over the landscape of long ago, still remain. Mrs. Matilda Kester, who united with this church by letter from the Grandview church April 8, 1865, has been a member nearly 64 years. James Bull and Mrs. Candace Shaver date from February, 1868. Mrs. Lottie Woodruff from 1872. I brought a letter from the church at Ithaca, N. Y., in 1873, and Mrs. Annie Hite dates from 1876. These six attaining over 50 years' membership in this church.

The first pastor of this church was Rev. J. W. Allison, son of Elder John Y. Allison. Following him the Rev. Nathaniel Williams was pastor. The sessional records do not give the dates of their min-

istry, but these two served the church from its organization Nov. 7, 1858, until 1864. On Sept. 9, 1864, the Rev. S. B. Taggart commenced his ministry which continued five years. During his incumbency the manse was built, located on what is now known as the late George B. Nay property. Following Mr. Taggart, Rev. Robert A. Mitchell served the church as pastor for about nine years. He was preeminently a doctrinal preacher. Of Scotch-Irish descent, quick tempered, uncompromising in his views, accepting Calvinism as implicitly as his Scotch-Irish ancestors ever did.

I never heard any one doubt the sincerity of Robert Mitchell, and no one, who could have heard as I did, his prayer at the bedside of his dying son, could doubt the grip his faith had upon God. He died in 1887, as he would have wished—in the harness. He preached Sunday and died, after a brief sickness, on Tuesday.

Following Mr. Mitchell, Rev. James Allison again served the church as pastor until failing eyesight compelled him to resign.

He was followed by Rev. John Gerrish, D. D. No more faithful pastor ever served us than Dr. Gerrish. I remember he and Mr. Dillingham, a later pastor, alike in some respects, very dissimilar in others, both of them not only advocated, but rigidly practiced tithing.

During Dr. Gerrish's pastorate the cabinet organ, which is now in the room upstairs, was purchased and was used for many years.

In the fall of 1883, Rev. W. A. Cutler began his work here and it was just at the beginning that

the fire occurred which burned the block from the Farmers' bank to the blacksmith shop east.

The pastorates of Revs. Cutler, Orr, Eggert, Black and Finley were marked by no unusual events. To some of us these faithful servants of God spoke words of comfort and sympathy when the future looked dark and forbidding. In the good providence of God they came to us. They labored faithfully with and for us, they spoke words of counsel and exhortation, they fed the flock as God gave them ability and they left us for other fields of labor, we trust still under God's guidance.

Following Mr. Finley was Mr. Dillingham, who finished his earthly service here. I have always been glad that neither his age nor his increasing infirmities caused his people to suggest his retirement. He died as pastor of this church.

Our next pastor was Mr. Powers, who combined a hesitating and somewhat awkward manner with remarkable intellectual powers and aptness to teach.

Following Mr. Powers, Mr. A. M. Elliott began his work here Sept. 15, 1901, continuing about five years.

Our next pastor was Rev. W. C. Snider, who commenced his pastorate here Feb. 1, 1906, and continued until July 19, 1910. Mr. Snider possessed the gift of clothing his ideas with an entrancing imagery, that held and delighted his listeners. I recall two of his sermons especially; one on the raising of Lazarus, and the other Elijah under the Juniper tree. I have no doubt but that many of you were thrilled as I was by them.

During Mr. Snider's pastorate this church building was erected, and during this time the church passed through the stormiest period of its existence—but storms pass, as does every thing else on this mundane sphere.

The new church was built during the summer and fall of 1909 and was dedicated Nov. 28, 1909. The dedicatory sermon was preached by Rev. Willis Craig of McCormick Seminary. An offering of \$3,200 was asked for to complete the cost of the church, and \$3,600 was pledged. The records do not show the exact cost of the building, but it was in the neighborhood of \$18,000.

The following year the old manse property was sold to George B. Nay, the old church was torn down and the present manse erected upon the site.

Following Mr. Snider, Mr. Ross McCown, a student in McCormick Seminary, after supplying the pulpit a few times, so endeared himself to the congregation, that we engaged him as pastor, agreeing to wait for him until he graduated from the seminary. He remained with us five years and it was during his pastorate that the pipe organ was installed. This was done at a cost of about \$2,200, the late Andrew Carnegie donating \$1,000. The installation of the organ was held Aug. 23, 1924. The officers of the church sent a special invitation to Mrs. Jess McAdams, who was the originator of the pipe organ fund which had been slowly accumulating for several years. A recital was given by a representative of the Kilgren Organ Co., congratulations by the pastor and special numbers by the choir, which at this time was perhaps at the zenith of its musical ability.

The first choir was organized by Rev. S. B. Taggart, himself a good singer, with Miss Tucker as organist. Anna Steele, soprano; Samantha Owens, alto; Dr. Ringland, tenor; and Milt Woodruff, bass. This was in 1865 or '66. Others of course assisted. In the lapse of time the personnel changed, but the musical ability was of superior order. Later we had Annie McVey, Eda Juntgen, Stella Juntgen, Claude and Lucy Shaver, E. Y. Allison, Mrs. Carrie Allison and Pope Wilhoit and still later Helen Hite, Aurelia Pinnell and Esther Hite.

The organists for a good many years were E. Y. Allison and Eda Steele, but for the last 16 or 17 years John Hite has been our faithful and steady reliance.

We seem to have fallen on barren times now, but 14 or 15 years ago it was different. How well do I remember the rendition of the "Te Deum" by Dudley Buck with Helen Hite, soprano, Aurelia Pinnell, alto, Pope Wilhoit, tenor and the rest of us doing our best; and "The Holy City" and "The King of Love My Shepherd Is." Ah, well, we recall those scenes with a sigh, and feel defrauded that the mutations of time have denied us such enjoyment in these later days.

After Rev. McCown removed to Pontiac, Mr. Pflug was our pastor and following him A. W. Bartholomew. He had served in the great war and had been severely wounded, was in a hospital for nine months, but recovered and resumed his work in the army of the Lord. Following Mr. Bartholomew was John M. Newman and following Mr. Newman came Rev. E. W. Kowalsky.

I make perhaps less comment upon the later incumbents of our pulpit than the earlier ones for two reasons, one is that I have already made this sketch too long, and the other is that the viewpoint is too close, making comment difficult. They have all been good men, varying of course in ability and gifts, but sincere servants of our Lord.

This church has contributed three men to the gospel ministry—Rev. W. F. Ringland, D. D., Rev. Chess Birch and Rev. C. R. Shaver, all of whom have done able and efficient work in the vineyard of the Lord. And we sent two, Alice and Bertha Ringland, to the African mission field.

This paper must close; it is of necessity fragmentary and sketchy. I have mentioned a few incidents while many more will occur to you.

As we look back through the lights and shadows of long ago and recall the opportunities for service God gave us and the pale ghosts of the sins of omission which sometimes rise to fill our hearts with regret, we pray that God in His infinite grace may forgive and in His infinite power and wisdom avert evil consequence and we turn to the more comforting view of the unvarying adherence of this church to the inerrancy of God's word and her unhesitating faith in the atoning sacrifice of our blessed Lord.

The early records of the Sunday school have not been preserved, but it seems to me that these notes would be incomplete without some mention of this department of church work.

I have been an attendant and usually a teacher in the Sunday school for more than sixty years and have noted the great changes in that period. The

pioneers found many obstacles in the way, but an obstacle is something to be overcome and when the mud was deep, the sidewalks invisible, the roads impassable, Presbyterian perseverance forbade any vacation of the Sunday school. Doubtless Mrs. Kester well remembers when she and Anna Steele came five miles through the mud and stayed over night with friends in town rather than miss the classes they were teaching in the Sunday school.

The first superintendent I remember was James Hogue. We then had no International lessons with the abundant helps. The music book was a small yellow back edition, words only, but with meter given so that the old reliable hymn tunes would fit. Sometimes a misfit would occur and the words give out before the tune did, but that could be remedied soon.

Among the earlier superintendents were Dr. Ringland, John Coffman and John Paxton, and among the teachers, Mrs. Allison, Mrs. Russell, Aunt Mary Steele, Miss Tillie Paxton and Anna Steele. It was customary in those times for the superintendent and the pastor to teach a class in addition to other duties. Doubtless there was frequently a limited ability among us—is yet for that matter—but the limits of faith and willingness to work had wide bounds.

The successors to these pioneers in Sunday school work have been worthy followers of their predecessors and while I cannot go into detail the work still goes on.

And what shall I more say, for the time would fail me to tell of the faithful services of the officers, the untiring and self-denying labors of the

women, the continuity of the prayer meeting or the prayers offered when none but God can hear.

The work has been at times strenuous, but for some of us, the lengthening shadows remind us that the close of day is at hand. Our part is nearly done. Other hands must write the future records. We leave the future of this church to our children. They cannot love it more than we have loved it, but we pray God that they may serve it more effectively than we have been able to do.

JUNE 21, 1934

I have been asked by the Session to add a brief appendix to the above data bringing the sketch up to the present time. The former article was written in 1928, nearly six years ago, and represented the weary pilgrim as looking backward across the Valley of Regret.

The backward view had its attractions, too. Recognition of God's loving care; answer to petitions; the loving care of His children, as his steps begin to falter, but his gaze is not backward now, from his position on the Delectable mountains he looks forward. The frosts of many winters have whitened his hair, his vision has grown dim, his natural force has abated, the friends of his youth have all vanished from his sight as they have one by one entered the dark valley. He recognizes that the time of his departure is at hand. The broken pitcher at the fountain and the broken bearings of the wheel at the cistern evidence that they are but the "Coming events which cast their shadows before." But while the pilgrim's voice is muted and his strength both physical and mental has failed, his faith, the gift of God, has not failed.

"By grace are ye saved through faith, and not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." Not many of us can say with Paul "I have fought a good fight," but we ought to be able to say "I have kept the faith."

But faith concerns the future to a large extent. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Consequently the Calvanistic doctrine is true if the foundation principle is true, which it is "Quod erat demonstratum."

I think I stated in my former sketch that the church in its inception, order, and belief was Old School Presbyterian, the tenets of which were the acceptance of the Bible as the inerrant word of God. Any deviation therefrom, even if labeled "liberal" is not allowed, for changing the name does not vouch for the accuracy of the doctrine.

The aged pilgrim resumes his journey, but you will notice that he no longer looks backward but forward, his chart and compass are still the Bible, his ultimate destination the city which has foundations whose builder and maker is God, his glorious hope to fulfill man's chief end, to "glorify God and enjoy him forever."

The pilgrim no longer looks backward over a more or less misspent life but forward to that mysterious miraculous change when his soul "made perfect in holiness," his mistakes covered, his sins washed away.

History ripens slowly, and the causes, purpose and veracity of events plucked too soon will be immature and sometimes misleading in their ultimate effects.

Rev. Grimes resigned and removed to Palestine, accepting the pastorate of the Palestine church.

The past six years have changed but little in fact to be recorded. The church has added the ministry of Rev. E. D. Clark, followed by the Rev. C. J. Grimes, our late pastor, who has made a specialty of young people's work—well knowing that when those who have borne the heat and burden of the day, nay, are bearing it, have ceased from their labors, the falling torch must be borne by younger hands.

Detours are freely offered, urged as a pleasanter road. The Pilgrim sternly rejects any change in chart, saying "I am persuaded that He is able to keep that I have committed to His care against that day." Christian Science, the Oxford Movement, Moscow Group Movement, the attempt of the Nazi to graft Christian principles on a Heathen doctrine, are all efforts to make finite judgment cover the infinite decrees.

Your Historian feels that his work is done. Other hands must take up the work, other pens must record the future events.

I close the last work of my earthly pen, with a prayer for those who take up the task as it falls from my palsied hand—may you be true to God's Word and faithful to the doctrines of our beloved church.

C. A. HITE,

I can only hope that when the mellow notes of "Taps" signal for me they may record, not the conclusion, but rather the limitless vision of God's love.

PRESENT MEMBERSHIP OF PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF KANSAS, ILLINOIS

And the Date of Their Reception

C. A. Hite	1873	Floyd Flannery	1914
Miss Fannie Brown	1880	Mrs. Floyd Flannery	1914
W. O. Greever	1880	Horton Juntgen	1914
Mrs. Lucy Neal	1885	Ed Wilson	1914
E. R. Hutton	1887	Harry Covey	1915
Mrs. Ella Hutton	1887	Miss Helen Covey	1915
Miss Zenobia Shaver	1888	Clinton Flannery	1915
Miss Ita Briscoe	1888	Mrs. H. S. Juntgen	1916
Mrs. Estella Tune	1888	Donald Neal	1917
H. S. Juntgen	1888	Maurice Neal	1917
Mrs. Margaret Vickrey	1892	Mrs. Ray Hughes	1917
Mrs. Elizabeth Mason	1893	Miss Iva Covey	1918
Mrs. Carrie Allison	1895	Anna Wiedenhoffer	1918
John M. Hite	1895	Mrs. H. L. Juntgen	1919
Mrs. Esther Wilhoit	1895	James R. Honn	1921
Martin Troll	1895	Dr. F. B. Weaver	1921
Miss Edna McDavitt	1896	Mrs. F. B. Weaver	1921
Harold Whidden	1897	Mrs. Martin Troll	1922
Mrs. Ada Nay	1897	Gaillard Parker	1923
Mrs. Kate Hite	1897	T. S. Wright	1923
Mrs. Lelia McMorris	1899	Mrs. T. S. Wright	1923
Mrs. Minnie Owens	1901	Maxine Wright	1923
Miss Marie Allison	1904	Blanche Willison	1923
Miss Matilda Carey	1905	Mrs. Bertha Strader	1923
Frank Neal	1905	Dale Wright	1924
Mrs. Mary E. Honn	1906	Donald Troll	1924
Miss Mamie Honn	1906	Mrs. Mary Smith	1924
Pope Wilhoit	1908	Ira Simpson	1924
Mrs. Kathryn Wilhoit	1908	Harrison Simpson	1924
Mrs. Eva Smiley	1908	Leatha Melvin	1924
Mrs. Ruth Moody	1908	Luther McKinnon	1924
Mrs. Pearl McKinnon	1909	John M. Tate	1924
Mrs. Myrtle Robinson	1913	Mrs. John M. Tate	1924
Mrs. Ethel Robinson	1913	Francis Vickrey	1924
Mrs. Grace Robinson	1913	Harold Vickrey	1924
Mrs. Lou Wilhoit	1913	Walter Laughead	1924
Mrs. Josephine Bull	1913	Mrs. Arilla Limes	1924

Pearl Limes	1924	Mrs. Catherine Crews	1933
Genelle Moody	1924	Mrs. Gaillard Parker	1933
Martha Moody	1924	Richard Allen	1934
Roy Melvin	1924	Mrs. Richard Allen	1934
Miss Katherine Hite	1924	Mrs. Nevada Edman	1934
Mrs. Clinton Flannery	1924	Hayes Hutchins	1934
Joe Willison	1924	Mrs. Hayes Hutchins	1934
Crawford Willison	1924	Don Vickrey	1934
Margaret Jean Wilhoit	1926	Everett Duensing	1934
O. T. Morris	1927	Helen Duensing	1934
Mrs. O. T. Morris	1927	Richard Hutchins	1934
Mrs. Ella Morris	1927	Betty Hutchins	1934
Miss Mainietta Smith	1927	Margaret Allen	1934
J. Lewis Monticue	1930	Max Allen	1934
Mrs. Dorothy Monticue	1930	Sally Mitchell Hite	1934
Kenneth Tate	1930	Mary Jane Hite	1934
Robert Tate Jr.	1930	Charles Moody	1934
Charles Parker	1930	R. L. Galbreath	1934
Hile Morris Jr.	1930	Mrs. R. L. Galbreath	1934
Robert Morris	1930	Eugene Galbreath	1934
Robert Livingston	1930	Arthur Clark	1934
Mrs. Alice Ashmore	1930		

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